TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
14519 Church Street
Upper Marlboro
Prince George's County
Maryland

PHOTOGRAPHS AND

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HABS NO. MD-1041

Location: 14519 Church Street, Upper Marlboro, Prince
                              George's County, Maryland

Significance: Trinity Church is an important landmark in the
                              town of Upper Marlboro due to its associations
                              with prominent families of the county, and as
                              an excellent example of Gothic Revival
                              ecclesiastic architecture, designed by one of
                              the leading architects of the day, Robert
                              Carey Long, Jr., of Baltimore, Maryland. The
                              congregation was formed on this site in 1810
                              by Thomas John Claggett, first American
                              Episcopalian Bishop.

Description: This is a one-story, three-bay-by-five-bay,
                              brick church with a steeply-pitched, gable-
                              front roof and pointed-arched, stained-glass
                              windows. Added to the north front is a three-
                              story vestibule and bell tower, with a three-
                              part, pointed-arch, open bell cote with
                              crenelated brickwork. The main entryway is to
                              the front of the tower and has a round-arched,
                              double doorway with a semi-circular light
                              above. Above the doorway is a pair of narrow
                              pointed-arched windows with matching lintels
                              which join with a double beltcourse (same
                              pattern with single windows at the side
                              elevations). Beltcourses and corbelled
                              brickwork appear throughout the tower.
                              Flanking the tower are buttresses, and on the
                              main block, narrow pointed-arched windows at
                              mid-story. The roof overhangs in the front,
                              supported by scrolled brackets. The lower,
                              single-story, one-bay-by-one-bay sanctuary is
                              to the rear, with a one-story, hipped roof
                              addition to the southwest corner.

                              The interior plan consists of a separate entry
                              vestibule, a nave with a center aisle with
                              open pews to either side, a organ and choir
                              loft to the north front, and a pointed-arched
                              opening through which the chancel and altar
                              are located, at the south end. The ceiling
                              covered with dark-stained wood paneling in a
                              coffered pattern. In the loft, which is
                              accessed by a stairway in the vestibule, is an
                              antique pipe organ.

Pointed-arched doorways at the south wall of the nave and west wall of the chancel lead to the sanctuary. The walls are a rough plaster with the windows recessed with splayed reveals and sills.

History:

The Trinity Church congregation was formed here in 1810, adopting a small frame church structure which had previously been used by a Presbyterian congregation. Its organizer was Thomas John Claggett, Bishop of Maryland, the first Episcopal Bishop to be concrecrated in America (in 1792). Claggett played a major role in the organization of the Episcopal Church after the Revolution. His appointment as Bishop is significant in that it marked the transformation of the church as truly American, and no longer tied to the Church of England. Claggett dedicated their new frame church in July of 1812, and served as its rector until his death in 1816.

In 1845 a Building Committee was formed to collect donations, and select an architect and builder for a new church (the current structure). In January of 1846, they advertised in the *Baltimore Sun* for bids. The accepted proposal came from William R. McNeal of Alexandria, Virginia, builder, along with plans by architect Robert Carey Long, Jr., of Baltimore, Maryland (McNeal, however, was eventually dismissed and the construction completed by local workmen).

Robert Carey Long, Jr., (1810-1849) was an established Baltimore architect, son of Robert C. Long, Sr., who was considered one of the most important early architects of Maryland. Robert Long, Jr.'s, designs included a number of distinguished residences in Mount Vernon Place, and churches in and around the Baltimore area. His death by cholera at age thirty-nine brought an early end to a promising career.

The new brick church building was consecrated on the 31st of December of 1846 by William R. Whittingham, Bishop of Maryland, upon the request of Reverend of Trinity, Cleland Nelson. On the 50th anniversary of the

completion of the church in 1896, the vestibule and bell tower were added.

Sources:

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Historic American Buildings Survey
June 1991